

4:00 pm Wednesday 14 June 2006

Diaspora Criticism and the Usual Suspects: Modernity, Transnationalism and Globalisation

Sudesh Mishra

It has been said that the total statement eludes the genre, any genre, but incites this or that generic statement from its place of hiding. These statements or propositions remain partial, incomplete, sustaining and sustained by the nomination. Since they uphold, interrupt or contravene each other in pursuit of the total statement, these secondary statements form a network of detours around the total statement. Each statement works as a substitute, that is to say, as a fragment that stands in for the whole without ever being equal to it. The total statement, in other words, propagates a series of surrogates for its semantic evasions. In their attempt to pin down an object called diaspora, a project in which the present writer is wryly implicated, diasporists deploy a plethora of surrogate concepts drawn especially from the fields of migration studies, social anthropology and economics. Of the many supplementary terms that swirl in the orbit of diaspora criticism (hybridity, *décalage*, discontinuity, multi-locality, nomadism, double consciousness, so on), the prominent ones are transnationalism, globalisation and modernity. This paper investigates how these concepts, which form powerful discourses in their own right, contribute to the pursuit of the elusive law of diaspora criticism.

Sudesh Mishra - His book *Diaspora Criticism* will be published in October this year by Edinburgh University Press. He is a descendant of Indian indentured workers transported to Fiji in the nineteenth century, he has written for *Subaltern Studies*, *Emergences* and *Social Text*.

**There is no entry charge and everyone is welcome.
Drinks and nibbles will be provided.**

The Blue Room , Building B, Room 2.. 20, Burwood Campus